

Runnymede Borough CouncilCOMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE12 November 2020 at 7.30 pm on MS Teams

Members of the Committee Present: Councillors I Chaudhri (Chairman), C Howorth (Vice-Chairman), M Adams, T Burton, M Harnden, N King, A Neathey, J Olorenshaw and J Wilson.

Members of the Committee absent: Councillor D Clarke

Councillors S Lewis and M Maddox also attended the meeting.

297 NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Group mentioned below had notified the Chief Executive of its wish that the change listed below be made to the membership of the Committee. The change was for a fixed period ending on the day after the meeting and thereafter the Councillor removed would be reappointed.

<u>Group</u>	<u>Remove</u>	<u>Appoint instead</u>
Conservative	Cllr S Walsh	Cllr J Wilson

The Chief Executive had given effect to the change to Committee membership in accordance with section 16(2) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

298 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 17 September 2020 were confirmed as a correct record to be signed when the Chairman was physically able to do so.

299 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D Clarke.

300 ST ANN'S HILL LODGE – UPDATE

The Committee was provided with an update on a small detached property, soon to be leased, which was owned by the Council as Trustees.

Located in 'The Dingle' at the foot of St Ann's Hill, the property known as 'The Lodge' had been empty for three years and was no longer needed by the Council's Green Space team as staff accommodation. After a delay, compounded by the Covid pandemic, the property had been refurbished and marketed, generating interest from a number of prospective tenants. The property had been viewed by 18 people and subsequently three offers had been made.

Commercial Services had drawn up the terms of the lease and considered the proposed rent of £14,400 per annum which would produce an estimated net surplus of £4,000 per annum for the Trust was acceptable, although some Members of the Committee thought that its location, amongst some very high value properties in the immediate vicinity, and in

its attractive, rural and secluded position might command a higher rental value. Although approving the rent as set out in the report, Officers were asked to re-visit this with Commercial Services.

Officers advised that the Council would need to make an application to the Charity Commission to facilitate and consent to the proposed arrangements because the estimated income was above £5,000 per annum, which would trigger compulsory registration of the charity.

The other legal and resources implications in the report were taken into account by Members to fulfil their duty as Trustees to make a decision that 'disposal' of the land to RBCI as the Head lease and the private rentor as the Underlease tenant was in the best interests of the Trust. The Trustees (through Officers) would also need to take various steps to comply with Charity Law. These were advertisement of the Charity Commission discretionary consent, obtaining an Order of the Court or an Order of the Charity Commission to allow the grant of the proposed lease and compliance with s119 (1) of the Charities Act 2011 as detailed in the report concerning taking the written advice (through the report being considered) of a qualified surveyor. It was also necessary as a local authority to comply with Sections 123 and 123A of the Local Government Act 1972 with regard to the length of the lease and advertisement of the disposal in the prescribed manner.

The terms of the Headlease and Underlease were noted, including that any proceeds of letting the property to a third party, after discharge of fees and appropriate maintenance costs would be passed to the charitable trust on a quarterly basis.

The Committee was satisfied that letting the land was appropriate as it was no longer needed for nor suited to any planned or feasible purpose ancillary to the charitable use of the land as a public recreation ground and a letting would generate an income which would benefit the charity. It was further noted that the income generated could be used to maintain both the residential property and the wider charitable land, without a permanent disposal of the Lodge. By keeping the Lodge maintained it would reduce any financial burden on the Trust.

Members approved the proposed recommendations accordingly.

RESOLVED that –

- i) the marketing process undertaken be noted;**
- ii) the structure of the proposed leases be agreed;**
- iii) the level of rent be agreed; and**
- iv) an application be made to the Charity Commission for a scheme/and/or an order consenting to the arrangement**

301 PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDERS (PSPOs) – UPDATE

The Committee was updated on a recent consultation regarding two Public Space Protection Orders which had not been reviewed since their introduction in June 2018 and were due to expire in June 2021. The purpose of the consultation was to establish whether it was proportionate for the orders to remain in place.

The response to the consultation was very encouraging in terms of the numbers participating in a relatively short period of time (from 12 August to 13 September 2020) and Officers advised that if renewed, the orders could be amended if the evidence was there to

support it at the time. The majority of respondees were in favour of retaining the orders, although in both cases respondees indicated they were not sure if the PSPOs had been successful but had not provided further information as to why they had come to that conclusion. It was thought that signs of success were improved behaviour, and low reports of anti-social behaviour. A slight majority favoured no change to the orders, where change was suggested it was mainly with regard to dispersal time with a majority wishing to increase the area covered by the PSPO in both locations.

Officers were invited to attend an Englefield Green Councillors' surgery to discuss the PSPO and in particular its coverage with interested parties and residents. Councillor N King would provide the details. Officers confirmed that enforcing the PSPOs and assessing whether it was proportionate to widen the area or adjust dispersal times would be subject to careful consideration in consultation with the police.

Officers were asked to note a request by Councillor Neathey for an item to be presented to a future meeting of the Committee regarding a request for a PSPO covering an area of Egham Hythe, under Standing Order 27.5. Officers advised that the introduction of new PSPOs would be carefully examined and matched with available evidence that this was the best solution.

In terms of publicity, Officers explained that the areas in which a PSPO was in force had several signs drawing them to people's attention; the Police were able to communicate how they operated and what the implication of breaching the PSPO were from receiving a warning notification, further warnings and, if necessary, a fixed penalty notice, the latter being the last resort. For those aged under 18 a letter was also sent to the parent/guardian which helped re-inforce the message.

Officers confirmed their availability to discuss with Councillors queries with regard to PSPOs and Community Safety, including suggestions for other PSPOs, one so mentioned was at a location in Ottershaw. In response, Officers stressed the need for background data on anti-social behaviour to evidence requests for PSPOs which the Chairman stated could then be considered by the Committee.

Whilst the worth of the PSPOs in protecting the community from anti-social behaviour was appreciated, the Committee was also keen for young people not to be 'criminalised' if issued with a warning or a fixed penalty notice about their behaviour and that encouraging them with positive distraction activities was important. Officers confirmed that falling foul of a PSPO did not result in a criminal record and agreed that early intervention was a priority and to signpost activities for young people in the warning letters where a breach of the PSPO occurs and were reliant on being informed what was available in the relevant areas. Notwithstanding, the loss of children's services was considered by some Members as a contributory factor to anti-social behaviour.

The Committee was content that the orders remain in place and would be reviewed in March 2021 before their expiry in June 2021.

RESOLVED that –

- i) the Public Space Protection Orders for areas of Englefield Green and Addlestone, as described in the report, remain in place until June 2021; and**
- ii) Officers to prepare a report for the March 2021 meeting of this Committee to determine whether the orders should be extended, and, if so, in an amended form, prior to their expiry in June 2021**

302 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES FEES AND CHARGES 2021/2022

The Committee's approval was sought of the proposed fees and charges for 2021/2022 for the services falling under Community Development and Community Services.

Members were advised that at least an inflationary increase of 2% was recommended to help balance the budget and cover applicable costs. However, in order to better understand the fee setting process, and whether the Council's cost base had changed in relation to actual inflationary costs and pressures, Officers were asked to bring a report to a future meeting setting out the cost base for key services and how they related to the level of fees and charges set. Officers explained that they were guided by advice from Financial Services on the proposed increases and considered affordability of services provided to the more vulnerable residents balanced by the need to cover costs and remain competitive. Officers also confirmed that although they undertook benchmarking with other boroughs this did not unduly influence the fees and charges that were set.

Officers advised that fees and charges were kept under review but that they would submit a further report should concerning trends be identified, particularly with regard to the removal of sibling discount for the School bus service which had been discussed by the former Community Services Member Working Group and maintaining and increasing demand for Meals at Home which Members thought was very good value for money. With regard to the Community Transport charges it was noted that the cost presented was for a single journey.

RESOLVED that –

the proposed fees and charges as set out in Appendix 'C' of the agenda report be approved, to be effective from the dates within the appendix or as soon as practical thereafter

303 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – QUARTERS 1 AND 2 2020/2021

Members reviewed the key performance indicators of Community Development for Quarters 1 and 2 of 2020/2021.

The Committee noted that it had been a difficult year, with most of the services and projects that would usually have been provided being cancelled owing to the Covid pandemic, notably the Surrey Youth Games.

A brief interlude before the second wave allowed Chertsey Museum and the Halls to open and it was acknowledged that staff had worked very hard in challenging circumstances. For example, Emma Warren and Doris Neville-Davies from Chertsey Museum were congratulated for their work and recognition received.

Officers reported that the Living Well week had taken place with 22 participants and for the foreseeable future much of the business centres activities could move to being delivered on-line such as Junior Citizen which had been postponed until February 2021.

During the two quarters, parks and open spaces had been well used although there had been some incidents of anti-social behaviour. Members were pleased to note that the % of Careline calls being answered within 60 seconds had exceeded its target. The Committee was impressed by this and asked Officers to include in the performance indicators table a column showing the number of careline calls taken in each quarter and staff in Safer Runnymede were congratulated on their work.

304 COMMUNITY SERVICES KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – QUARTERS 1 AND 2 2020/2021

The Committee noted the performance of the Community Services business centre for quarters 1 and 2 of 2020/2021.

Officers reported that their services had also been impacted by Covid; the social centres remained closed and a number of staff, as was the case with Community Development, had been re-deployed to the Welfare response carrying out tasks which were well received by vulnerable residents across the borough. Staff in Community Services were congratulated for their work and especially their response to Covid 19.

The target for the number of Meals at Home items delivered had been well exceeded; partly owing to more demand during the Covid restrictions but numbers had been increasing prior to the pandemic and it was hoped would be maintained.

Similarly, the number of referrals for Homesafe Plus and the Handyman Services had risen significantly above target, demonstrating their important profile amongst the wider health and care system. Officers advised they would submit a report on a funding bid to the Integrated Care Partnership to develop the offer further to a future meeting of the Committee in 2021.

The Social Prescribing team had successfully led on the introduction of a Befriending service as part of the pandemic response; whilst, sadly, a member of the team who had played a key role in the service had now left the Council, two other members of staff had been recruited.

Members noted that progress with the Home Improvement Agency had been paused owing to the delays with the Surrey Heath Partnership and other significant pressures on Community Services. However, Officers would include an additional performance indicator for the number of enquiries received when resources permitted.

The Committee extended their gratitude to all staff in Community Services for their continued commitment to the Council and the community.

305 FRENCH BROTHERS

By resolution of the Committee, the press and public were excluded from the meeting during the consideration of this matter under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the discussion would be likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

The Committee noted that French Brothers had been offering a ferry service from Runnymede Pleasure Grounds for a number of years and had been paying the amount stated in the report for the specified period. The company were a valuable asset, increasing footfall at the Pleasure Grounds.

Commercial Services had negotiated new terms for their lease and these were approved by the Committee. The new lease would result in a betterment for the Trust and would add to the surplus income that could be used for improvements and other projects in the borough. A few observations were made, and Officers were requested to discuss with Councillors Maddox and Neathey specific queries relating to the terms and liabilities of the lease.

To make sure the rent remained at an appropriate level, it would be reviewed every three years. The Committee was content with this, but Officers were asked to confirm how many outstanding rent reviews there remained relating to Community Development.

RESOLVED that –

the new draft licence agreement for French Brothers' use of the landing place at Runnymede Pleasure Grounds be approved

(The meeting ended at 9.19 pm)

Chairman